

**REMARKS**

Claims 1, 3-11 and 13-17 are pending. Of these, claims 1 and 3-8 are indicated as allowed. By this Amendment, claims 12 and 18-20 are cancelled without prejudice to, or disclaimer of, the subject matter contained therein. Claim 9 is amended. No new matter is added.

Claim 9 is amended to delete a feature that renders claim 9 indefinite according to the Examiner and also to include the features of claim 12. Claim 12 is cancelled accordingly.

In the previous Office Action issued on May 15, 2006, claims 11-13, among others, were indicated as reciting allowable subject matter. Relying on that indication, claim 9 is amended to be in condition for allowance by including the features of claim 12.

It is respectfully submitted that entry of the amendments is proper as 1) the amendments are made to cancel claims, 2) the amendments present the claims in better form for appeal, and 3) there is good and sufficient reason why the amendments are necessary and were not earlier presented. As to the third point, it is respectfully submitted that the amendments will place the application in condition for allowance, and were not presented earlier to fully argue the patentability of the claims. The amendments do not raise new issues requiring more than nominal consideration by the Examiner.

For the following reasons, reconsideration is respectfully requested.

**INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT**

An Information Disclosure Statement was submitted on December 4, 2006. Consideration is respectfully requested.

**REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §112:**

Claims 9-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

The rejection as to cancelled claims 12, and 18-20 is moot. Claim 9 is amended to obviate the rejection by deleting a feature that is asserted as rendering claim 9 indefinite.

Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 9-11 and 13-17 is respectfully requested.

**REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §102:**

Claims 9, 10, 14, 15, and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Kawano (U.S. Patent Application 2003/0072090 A1).

The rejection as to cancelled claim 20 is moot. As to claim 9, claim 9 is amended to delete a feature that is indicated as rendering claim 9 indefinite and to include the features of claim 12, which was indicated as reciting allowable subject matter in the previous Office Action issued on May 15, 2006. Accordingly, claim 9 is allowable over Kawano. Claims 10, 14, and 15, which depend from claim 9, are likewise allowable over the applied reference to Kawano for at least the reasons discussed above, and for the additional features they recite. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

**ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER:**

Claims 1 and 3-8 are presently allowed.

**CONCLUSION:**

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 503333.

Respectfully submitted,

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